



A Family Engagement Newsletter

January 2021

## FOR THE GROWNUPS

You may have heard the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) describe some of its programs as, "a learning adventure designed to help you thrive," but what does that mean? Facilitator [Kelli Karen Smith](#) shines some light from her experience with Team Bright.



### Team Bright Shines

[Stronger Me, Stronger We's Mind in The Making](#) is a five-hour, five-week journey that explores [executive functions](#), [WOOP](#), focus & self-control, perspective-taking, and communicating.

Thursday mornings became a time of comfort, laughter, and mutual motivation as a group of women bonded through Mind in the Making, a workshop where we started as strangers and now are friends. *Editor's Note: Stronger Me, Stronger We offerings are open to all, this particular group is all women.*

During our first meeting, we introduced ourselves by drawing symbols that represented who we are. Was it a coincidence that we had a lot in common? As the weeks progressed, we listened to and supported each other. The conversations were so natural and honest. The days spent apart gave us time to put in motion the principal lessons that we reviewed during our virtual weekly meeting.

Team Bright was fun and insightful, and each week, our hour was filled with the desire to learn. We supported each

## TIME TOGETHER

Science tells us that children's first years are when they develop the foundation for lifelong learning. Every time we connect with them, it's not just their eyes that light up - it's their brains too! In these moments, half a million neurons fire at once, taking in all the things we say and do. We can't see it happening, but the brain is growing and strengthening as they absorb the world around them.

It is this foundation that drives a child's success in school and helps them thrive as adults. YOU have the power to help build that foundation!

### TIP #14 | Rolly Pollie



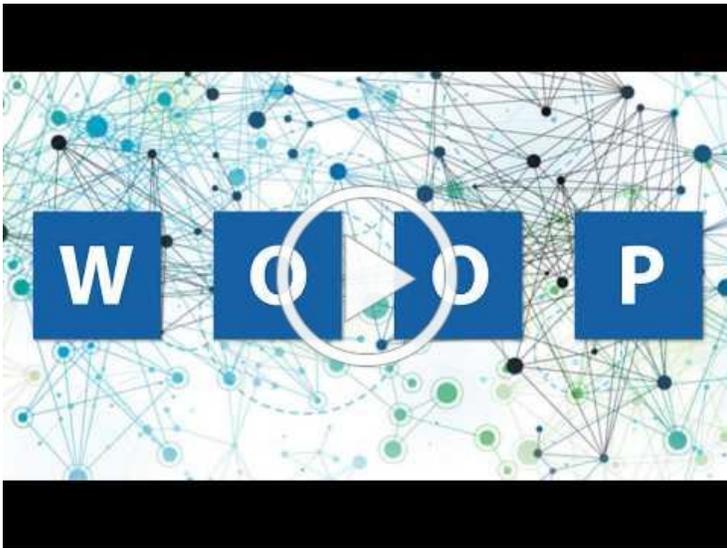
### TIP #22 | Bag Adventures!



in the group [WOOP--Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, and Plan--](#) and we celebrated our wellness achievements of walking, yoga, bike riding, exercising, stretching, and drinking water.

"Joan," who arrived the first hour very shy and reserved, blossomed like a flower during the five weeks. She told us how nervous and hesitant she was about joining. Not knowing what to expect, she began to talk and share. She felt the bond and began to trust us, which made her feel comfortable. This was a place she felt safe and heard.

"Rose" was excited that the principles we introduced can be used with any age. As an educator, she realized that WOOP is something she can happily share. "I will use this throughout my life. This is an ongoing project. WOOP can be something small or a huge wish."



[The WOOP exercise](#)

Each week during our conversations, we incorporated drinking water and toasted each other for our ideas and achievements with ourselves and the children in our lives.

During our final conversation, we welcomed guest artist [Laurie Miller](#). She led a seated yoga practice, guiding us through breathing and stretches. We inhaled peace and positivity and exhaled worry and negativity. We reaffirmed that we are confident and courageous.

Mind in the Making helped us strengthen several skills that will help support all of our relationships. We felt connected and agreed that our five-week journey is a journey that has just begun. We ended our conversation with a toast: to our family, friends, and community.

Each [Stronger Me, Stronger We](#) group is unique in the approach of the adventure, but the thing they all have in common is everyone leaves with a metaphorical toolkit filled with new, valuable knowledge. All offerings are free as a gift from [The Patterson Foundation](#).

Interested in participating? SCGLR would love to include you :- )

Click the link below to explore the possibilities.

\*Workshops are available in Spanish.

[Stronger Me, Stronger We -- Mind in the Making](#)

## Kindergarten Readiness Bags!



### [Kindergarten Registration and Readiness Literacy Bags](#)

For the 4th year, due to popular demand from teachers, principals, and willing funding partners, including The Patterson Foundation, Rotary Club of Sarasota Foundation, Charlotte Community Foundation, the School District of DeSoto County, and Community Foundation of Sarasota County, Kindergarten Readiness Bags are back! Who gets them? All incoming kindergarteners attending public schools in Sarasota, Charlotte, and DeSoto counties and all incoming kindergarteners attending Title 1 schools in Manatee County.

What's included in these magical bags?

- Two packages of flashcards
- Literacy charts
- Magnetic lowercase alphabet letters
- Magnetic uppercase alphabet letters
- Drawing paper
- Jumbo crayons
- Kindergarten Readiness Checklists
- Kindergarten Readiness Parent Guides
- Information packets about [Attendance Works](#), [Vroom](#), [Mind in the Making](#), and [Stronger Me, Stronger We](#)
- Josh the Baby Otter book
- Magic Postcards

SCGLR created Kindergarten Readiness Bags to provide learning support for incoming kindergarteners in the months before school begins so that children can start school ready to learn. If your child is a bit younger, [Soar in 4 created Pre-Kindergarten Readiness Bags](#).

Earlier this year, SCGLR Engagement Team member Shalia Moore-Hayes shared in her blog post, [Aspirations for a Seamless Transition](#), "Only a few weeks or months separate the preschooler from the kindergartner. In that short span, a child's developmental needs do not change significantly, but the kindergarten classrooms where they receive care and education may differ dramatically from the settings to which they have grown accustomed. A growing body of research also suggests that today's kindergartens are becoming more focused on academic



goals. This trend can make the transition from VPK to kindergarten even more complex."

Parents, caregivers, doctors, family members, preschool teachers, early-learning programs, and the broader community all play a role in closing the gap on school readiness and ensuring that all students arrive at school healthy and developmentally ready to actively participate and learn! Click here to access and share [Leap Frog's Kindergarten Skills Checklist](#). Let's get our kiddos ready!

We welcome your thoughts. Contact us at [info@GradeLevelReadingSuncoast.net](mailto:info@GradeLevelReadingSuncoast.net).